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STAR WARS
DARK EMPIRE II
4 OF 6

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DARK EMPIRE II

Tom Veitch Cam Kennedy

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Battle on Byss

Learning that Luke Skywalker and Kam Solusar are on the ancient Jedi planet Ossus, Emperor Palpatine orders his Darkside Executor Sedriss to bring back the two Jedi — alive.

Meanwhile, amidst the ruins of Ossus, Luke and Kam find a young man and woman tied to an ancient tree. Luke senses the two youths — whose names are Jem and Rayf — are potential Jedi. When Luke frees them, he incurs the wrath of their tribe, the Ysanna.

But when Sedriss and his shocktroops attack, the Ysanna warriors help the Jedi defeat the Imperial darksiders. In a desperate attempt to save himself, Sedriss takes the young woman Jem Ysanna captive.

Unexpectedly, Sedriss confronts a new adversary — the withered old "tree" is in fact an intelligent being — Master Ood Bnar, a 5000-year-old Neti Jedi! Awakening now from a thousand-year sleep, Master Ood engages Sedriss in a great Force-battle. The encounter ends disastrously when Master Ood draws down a massive charge of energy that destroys them both!

Examining the place where the departed Jedi stood, Rayf Ysanna discovers Jedi treasure hidden under Master Ood's roots — a trove of long-forgotten lightsabers!

Elsewhere, across the Galaxy, Rebel commandos led by Lando Calrissian and Wedge Antilles set into motion a dangerous plan to strike at the heart of the Empire!

A SHIPMENT OF *VIPER AUTOMADON WAR DROIDS* IS EN ROUTE TO BYSS ABOARD IMPERIAL STAR HAULER *RELIANCE*.

THESE ADVANCED KILLING MACHINES WEREN'T DESIGNED TO CARRY *PASSENGERS!*

MY *JOINTS* ARE SEIZING UP IN THIS CRAMPED SPACE!

I DON'T KNOW *WHY* IT WAS NECESSARY TO DRAG MY COUNTERPART AND MYSELF ALONG ON THIS *DANGEROUS* MISSION!

BRRTT BIP TWIP EEP BDWEEP!

YEAH! BEIN' JAMMED IN NEXTA TWO *BLABBIN' DROIDS* AIN'T EXACTLY MY IDEA OF A *HOLIDAY CRUISE*.

LANDO--TELL 'EM TA CUT THE *RACKET* BACK THERE!

RIGHT, ZEV--

THREEPIO --ONCE WE TAKE THE CITADEL, I'LL NEED YOU TO DO SOME *TRANSLATING*...

...AND I NEED *ARTOO* TO LINK ME INTO THE EMPIRE'S *COMMAND COMPUTERS*.

BUT RIGHT NOW, I NEED YOU BOTH TO *SHUT UP!*

I HOPE THIS WORKS, ZEV... *WAR DROIDS* ARE HARD TO CONTROL ONCE THEIR *BATTLE-PROGRAMMING* KICKS IN!

GOVERNOR BELTANE CONFIGURED THE VIPERS FOR *SUPERVISED COMBAT*, LANDO--

THE DROIDS WILL MAKE THEIR *OWN* DECISIONS, BUT WE'LL HAVE *MANUAL OVERRIDE*.

IT'S STILL A CRAZY LONG SHOT, ZEV.

IF WE PULL THIS OFF, I'M GOIN' BACK TA *GAS MINING!*

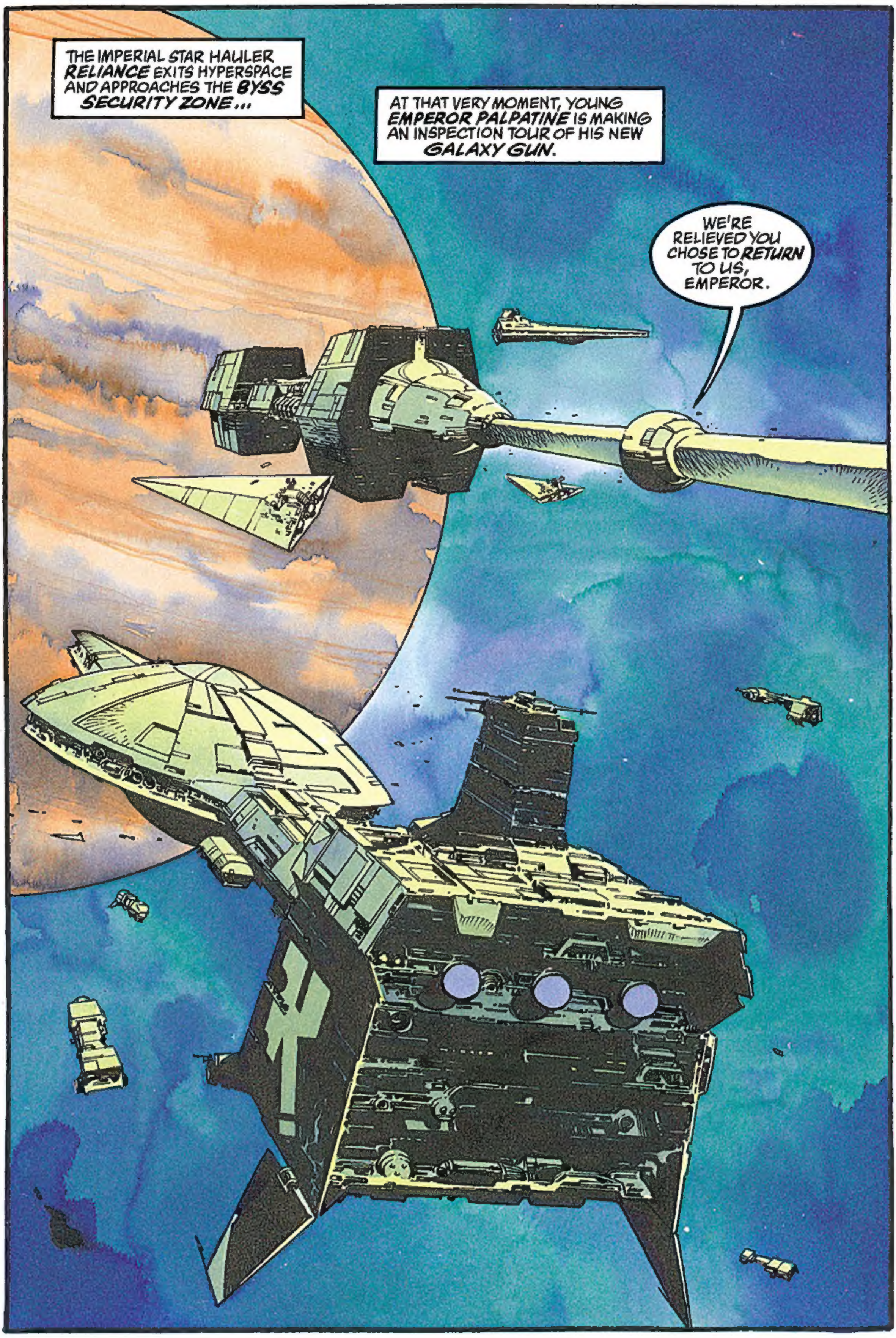
IN THE CARGO HOLD OF *RELIANCE*, THE *VIPER AUTOMADONS* SIT BOLTED TO THE DECK... WITH REBEL TEAMS CONCEALED IN THEIR MECHANICAL GUTS!

SQUAD LEADER! WE ACHIEVE DOCKING ORBIT OVER BYSS IN *TWELVE* MINUTES--

--HAVE YOUR MEN READY TO SUPERVISE THE *TRANSFER* OF THE NEW WAR DROIDS TO *CARGO SHUTTLES.*

YES, *SIR.* THE MEN ARE READY.

WE'LL UNBOLT THE DROIDS AS SOON AS WE ACHIEVE ORBIT, SIR.


THE IMPERIAL STAR HAULER RELIANCE EXITS HYPERSPACE AND APPROACHES THE BYSS SECURITY ZONE...
AT THAT VERY MOMENT, YOUNG EMPEROR PALPATINE IS MAKING AN INSPECTION TOUR OF HIS NEW GALAXY GUN.
WE'RE RELIEVED YOU CHOSE TO RETURN TO US, EMPEROR.

I COULD NOT HAVE DONE OTHERWISE, LETH.

NOW EXPLAIN THE OPERATION OF THIS ***NEW WEAPON*** TO ME.

OF COURSE, YOUR MAJESTY! AS YOU ALREADY KNOW, ITS PURPOSE IS TO LAUNCH ***INTELLIGENT PROJECTILES*** INTO HYPERSPACE...

EACH PROJECTILE CAN EXIT HYPERSPACE AT ***PRECISE*** COORDINATES, FIND ITS TARGET...AND ***DESTROY*** IT.

ITS THREAT IS ***ABSOLUTE.***

MARVELOUS. IT'S A WONDER WE DIDN'T THINK OF IT ***DECADES*** AGO--

--MY GALAXY WEAPON IS SURE TO INSPIRE ***OBEDIENCE.*** IT MEANS THE ***END*** OF THE REBEL ALLIANCE!

THIS WEAPON CAN DESTROY A CITY...A LAND MASS...OR EVEN AN *ENTIRE* PLANET *ANY-WHERE* IN THE GALAXY.

EVERYTHING IS FALLING INTO PLACE AS I HAVE *FORESEEN.*

YOUR EXCELLENCY! I HAVE JUST BEEN INFORMED THAT SOME-THING *TERRIBLE* HAS HAPPENED!

SEDRISS AND *GOIR* ARE DEAD! *MURDERED* BY THE JEDI SKYWALKER AND SOLUSAR.

SKYWALKER?

HE IS TURNING MY DARK-SIDE SECRETS *AGAINST* ME, I AM CERTAIN OF IT!

I TAUGHT HIM *TOO WELL!*

FIRST KATTH AND FASS... NOW SEDRISS AND GOIR.

WITHOUT MY *DARKSIDE WARRIORS,* SKYWALKER MAY WELL TRIUMPH!

YOU... *TEDRYN-SHA* AND *XECR NIST--!*

I HAVE *WATCHED* YOU...YOU HAVE ADVANCED IN SUBMISSION TO MY *WILL!*

I WILL MAKE YOU *DARK JEDI*...EXTENSIONS OF MY OWN POWER!

KNEEL BEFORE ME!

XECR NIST-- YOU WILL REPLACE SEDRISS AS MY MILITARY COMMANDER.

TEDRYN-SHA-- YOU WILL BE SECOND IN COMMAND.

I NOW VEST YOU BOTH WITH THE FULL RANK OF DARK JEDI.

LET THIS POWER ENTER YOU AND FILL YOU WITH THE KNOWLEDGE AND THE STRENGTH OF THE DARK SIDE OF THE FORCE THAT IS MINE TO GIVE--!

WHO CAN FATHOM THIS MYSTERIOUS POWER AND ITS EFFECTS? WIELDED BY A SAVANT LIKE PALPATINE, THE DARK SIDE CAN KILL A MAN--

--OR IT CAN BESTOW THE MOST MALEVOLENT OF GIFTS!

THE MAGNITUDE OF PALPATINE'S EMPOWERMENT CAUSES A GREAT DISTURBANCE IN THE FORCE--

--A SHOCK THAT IS FELT ACROSS THE GALAXY, AMONGST THE RUINS OF ANCIENT JEDI CITIES.

DID YOU FEEL *THAT?*

FEEL WHAT?

SEDRISS WASN'T LYING. EMPEROR PALPATINE IS *ALIVE* AGAIN. I *KNOW* IT.

BUT *WHY* DIDN'T I SENSE ANYTHING BEFORE NOW?

N'KAO SHUTHA... LUKE -- WE *FOUND* IT!

BNATU EKOUDA JEDI!

MAKAO TYLLUP! IT IS *EXACTLY* WHERE MY GREAT-GRANDFATHER *SAID* IT WAS!

YOU'VE FOUND A JEDI *LIBRARY?!*

RAYF YSANNA'S GREAT-GRANDFATHER KNEW A *SECRET* HE KEPT FROM THE REST OF THE TRIBE-- THE LOCATION OF A *JEDI LIBRARY* THAT REMAINED UNDISTURBED FOR *FOUR THOUSAND YEARS!*

AS LUKE AND KAM ENTER THE TOWERING HALL CRAMMED WITH THE ARTIFACTS OF ANOTHER TIME, THEY ARE REMINDED EXACTLY HOW GREAT THE JEDI WERE IN THE PRIME OF THEIR EXISTENCE.

THESE BOOKS-- THEY ARE AMAZINGLY PRESERVED.

IT'S THE DRY AIR... LIKE TATOOINE. THINGS LAST FOREVER.

MY GREAT-GRANDFATHER KEPT IT SECRET BECAUSE HE KNEW PEOPLE WOULD WANT TO TAKE EVERY-THING AND SELL IT.

LOOK AT THIS BOOK! CAN... YOU READ WHAT IT SAYS?

A LITTLE. IT'S SOMETHING ABOUT "JEDI BATTLE MEDITATION." I'LL BET THREEPIO COULD READ IT.

OBI-WAN MENTIONED BATTLE MEDITATION.

I SHOULD STUDY THIS BOOK... I SHOULD STUDY ALL THESE BOOKS.

LUKE... I WANT TO BE A JEDI.

JEM, YOUR WHOLE TRIBE IS STRONG IN THE FORCE.

I WILL ASK THE CHIEFS TO HEAR ME OUT.

YOU WILL BE A JEDI.

LUKE! I'M SCANNIN' THE ROOF--IT'S NOT SAFE. WE'LL HAVE TO BRING A CREW IN TO REINFORCE IT.

LET'S NOT HANG AROUND TOO LONG.

THE *HOLOCRON* WAS RIGHT-- LUKE HAS FOUND IMPORTANT JEDI ARTIFACTS ON OSSUS. HE HAS ALSO FOUND SOMETHING *GREATER*...

CHIEF OKKO, I BELIEVE YOUR ANCESTORS WERE *JEDI*....YOU CAN BE JEDI.

WE ARE *NOT* JEDI. WE ARE *YSANNA*.

WE DO NOT NEED *YOU* TO TEACH US ANYTHING. YSANNA MAGIC IS *STRONG*.

OKKO, MY SISTER AND I WANT TO GO *WITH* LUKE SKYWALKER. *WE* WILL BECOME JEDI KNIGHTS.

IT IS THE *FORCE* THAT LEADS US TO THIS DECISION.

AND IF THE JEDI GROW STRONG, WHAT ABOUT THE *YSANNA*? ARE THE YSANNA TO FADE INTO THE SKY?

THE YSANNA GODS ARE *NOT* PLEASED WITH YOUR CHOICE, *RAYF* AND *JEM*. BUT THEY TOLD US *NOT* TO STOP YOU.

GOOD! THE FORCE WILL PROTECT RAYF AND JEM...AND I WILL TRAIN THEM *MYSELF*.

YOU WON'T REGRET IT, CHIEF. LUKE IS THE *BEST* THERE IS...A REAL *JEDI MASTER*.

THE YSANNA AGREE TO *STAND WATCH* OVER THE JEDI RUINS UNTIL THE REBEL ALLIANCE SENDS IN THEIR EXCAVATION TEAMS.

WITH THE TWO YOUNG YSANNA WARRIORS ABOARD, THE *JEDI EXPLORER* COMPLETES ITS MISSION TO OSSUS--AND BEGINS THE RETURN TO *PINNACLE BASE!*

ELSEWHERE, THE *MILLENNIUM FALCON* IS DEPARTING THE SPACEPORT MOON *NAR SHADDAA*... UNDER LESS ENJOYABLE CIRCUMSTANCES!

LEIA! CHEWIE! WE'VE GOT TWO MORE HUNTERS ON OUR TAIL!

BOUNTY HUNTERS, ALERTED THAT THE *FALCON* IS IN PORT, HAVE BEEN LYING IN WAIT AMIDST THE *SPACE DEBRIS* THAT ORBITS THE SPACEPORT MOON.

I'VE GOT ONE OF 'EM IN MY SIGHTS, HAN--

WATCH YOUR *LEFT*, CHEWIE! THE OTHER ONE'S TRYING TO *OUTFLANK* US!

HNRROORRG!!

HAN ADROITLY ADJUSTS THE *FALCON'S* ATTITUDE TO GIVE THE TWIN TURRET-GUNS A *CLEAR SHOT* AT THE PURSUIT SHIPS--

--LEIA AND CHEWBACCA DO THE REST!

BUT ANOTHER BOUNTY HUNTER HAS HIS EYES ON THE FALCON AS IT DEPARTS NAR SHADDAA... THIS STALKER IS A BIT MORE SKILLFUL IN AVOIDING DETECTION!

BOBA FETT IS DETERMINED NOT TO LOSE HIS PREY ANOTHER TIME. HIS LASER-BOLTS FIND THEIR MARK!

WE'RE HIT BAD! BUT WHO--

CHEWIE! GET BELOW AND LOCK DOWN THE REACTOR LINES!

WE'VE GOT TEN MINUTES OF RESERVE POWER-- BUT THAT AIN'T GONNA HELP WITH FETT POUNDING ON OUR TAIL!

I'M TAKIN' US INTA THAT GAS CLOUD. IT'S DANGEROUS, BUT IT'S THE ONLY CHANCE!

HAN SOLO'S CHOICE IS A RISKY ONE. ***INTERSTELLAR GAS CLOUDS*** CAN BE EXTREMELY ***RADIOACTIVE***-- OR HARBOR ***LIFEFORMS*** THAT WILL EAT THROUGH THE HULL OF A STARSHIP IN MINUTES!

CHEWBACCA STOLE BOBA FETT'S ***HELMET***-- BUT FETT CARRIES A ***SPARE*** ABOARD ***SLAVE I***.

MY ***SCANNER*** CAN'T SEE INTO THAT SPACE CLOUD.

SOLO'S A ***FOOL*** TO GO IN THERE. HE CAN'T HIDE IN THERE FOREVER WITH THAT KIND OF DAMAGE.

I'LL BE ***RIGHT HERE*** WHEN HE COMES OUT.

THIS ISN'T THE ***BEST*** IDEA YOU EVER HAD, HAN.

WITHOUT VISIBLE STARS, THE ***NAVI-COMP*** CAN'T TAKE OUR BEARINGS.

I KNOW. THESE GAS CLOUDS CAN GO ON FOR ***LIGHT YEARS***. I'M GOING TO SWING THE ***FALCON*** AROUND AND...

WAIT A MINUTE--

AWRIGHT! WHAT ***LUCK***! WE'RE OUT THE ***OTHER SIDE***!

NRROWWNN!

BEYOND THE INTERSTELLAR GAS CLOUD LIES A *POCKET OF SPACE* WHERE AN ENTIRE RACE OF PEOPLE LIVE *CUT OFF* FROM THE REST OF THE GALAXY...

WHOA! WHERE'D HE COME FROM?

AWRRUUNNH!

YOU ARE INTRUDING ON *GANATHAN SPACE.*

YOU WILL ACCOMPANY US TO PORT...OR YOU WILL BE FIRED ON AND DESTROYED.

YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO *TOW* US, PAL--WE'RE FLYING ON *FUMES.*

THE *FALCON'S* REACTOR LINES ARE LEAKING BADLY... KNOWING THEIR ONLY CHANCE IS TO GET TO A PORT, SOLO IS RELIEVED TO BE CAPTURED BY THIS STEAM-POWERED BATTLE-SHIP--THE *ROBIDA COLOSSUS!*

TOWER COMMAND... WE HAVE AN *OUTSIDER* VESSEL IN TOW. WE'RE BRINGING THEM IN FOR *DISMANTLING*.

GOOD WORK, CAPTAIN. I'LL INFORM THE *KING*. HE WILL BE INTERESTED IN *MEETING* THESE INTRUDERS.

THE *GANATH SYSTEM* IS CAUGHT IN AN ANTIQUE ERA OF LOW-TECH, SLOW-SPEED SPACE TRAVEL.

THE CREW OF THE *FALCON*, AMAZED BY THE FANTASTIC *STEAM-POWERED* SPACE VESSEL, ARE EVEN MORE ASTONISHED AS THEY DESCEND TO THE CAPITAL OF THE *GANATHAN HOMEWORLD*.

IN NEARLY TOTAL ISOLATION, GANATHAN CIVILIZATION HAS DEVELOPED MORE SLOWLY THAN THE REST OF THE GALAXY.

WHAT A STRANGE PLACE -- AND SO *NEAR* NAL HUTTA. I'M SURPRISED YOU NEVER HEARD OF IT.

SPACERS TELL A *LOT* OF STORIES. I HEARD THINGS ...BUT *NOBODY* WHO TRIED BREACHING THAT GAS CLOUD *EVER* CAME BACK.

ATTENTION!

HIS ROYAL EMMINENCE, *KING EMPATOJAYOS OF GANATH!*

LOWER YOUR GUNS, MEN. THERE IS *NO* DANGER HERE--

THESE TWO WOMEN ARE *JEDI!*

THE RULER OF GANATH IS A HALF-MAN ENCASED IN *PROSTHETIC MACHINERY!*

IT HAS BEEN MANY, MANY YEARS SINCE I HAVE SEEN A JEDI KNIGHT... I THOUGHT VADER HAD KILLED US ALL.

HUH-- YOU'RE A JEDI?!

YES, VIMA KNOWS! JEDI!

JEDI. JEDI. JEDI!

IT'S TRUE! THE FORCE IS BRIGHT IN YOU.

WHAT LITTLE IS LEFT OF ME! ... VADER HUNTED ME AND MY SHIP WAS DESTROYED...

...MY RUINED BODY ENCASED IN A PRESSURE SUIT, I FLOATED IN EMPTY SPACE... UNTIL I WAS RESCUED BY THE GANATHANS!

THEY SAY A JEDI STRONG IN THE FORCE CAN RULE THOSE LESS POWERFUL THAN HIMSELF. THIS I HAVE DONE... I HOPE WITH JUSTICE!

BUT COME... WE HAVE MUCH TO DISCUSS.

VADER MUST BE A VERY GREAT WAR-LORD BY NOW... HE MUST RULE MANY SYSTEMS.

YOU HAVE BEEN OUT OF TOUCH, HAVEN'T YOU!

BYSS. THE SPACER'S BISTRO.

SO THEY TORE APART THE STARLIGHT INTRUDER AND MELTED HIM TA SLAG?

YEAH. THE IMPS LET SOME SCAVS STRIP OFF THE GOOD STUFF BEFORE THEY BROKE HER UP FOR THE FURNACES.

S'DAMN SHAME. SALLA WORKED FOR SIX YEARS BUILDIN' THAT SHIP!

NAMYM SI NIWD OOG HCRA!

NFOOTA! CHECK IT! THE IMPS ARE TAKIN' DELIVERY ON SOME NEW KIND OF WAR DROIDS!

IMPERIAL STAR HAULER RELIANCE HAS REACHED PORT--AND IS BUSILY SHUTTLING ITS PRECIOUS CARGO OF ADVANCED WAR DROIDS TO THE MAIN MILITARY TERMINAL.

INSIDE THE DROIDS, THE REBEL COMMANDOS ARE READY TO GO TO WORK!

WEDGE ANTILLES BRIEFS THE ASSAULT TEAMS ON A CODED SUBSPACE CHANNEL.

OKAY REBS... OUR DROIDS ARE ON THE DOCK. AS SOON AS THE LAST ONE'S DOWN, TRIGGER THE POWER AND TURN 'EM LOOSE!

WAY AHEAD OF YOU, WEDGE--!

ZEV--KICK START THIS THING! LET'S SMASH OUR WAY OUT OF HERE AND HEAD FOR THE CITADEL!

OH, MY... ARTOO, THIS IS THE END FOR US! I CAN FEEL IT!

BRWEET?

THE ALLIANCE PLAN IS SET IN MOTION... THE VIPER AUTOMADONS SPRING TO LIFE--!

AS FAR AS THE IMPERIALS KNOW, THEY'VE JUST TAKEN DELIVERY OF A SHIPMENT OF MALFUNCTIONING WAR DROIDS!

CAPTAIN! ALERT PLANETSIDE SECURITY! WE'VE GOT A DROID REVOLT ON OUR HANDS!

TELL HIM WE'LL NEED GUNSHIPS AND TANK DROIDS TO HANDLE THESE THINGS!

YOU SEE THAT? THOSE WAR DROIDS ARE GOIN' BERSERK!

NTYYLLP THNOOTA!

THIS MUST BE THE DEAL HAN WAS WHISPERIN' ABOUT--THOSE DROIDS ARE PACKED WITH REBELS!

INDEED THEY ARE.

AND THE ELEMENT OF SURPRISE HAS GIVEN THE REBELS THE ADVANTAGE. BUT THEY MUST ACT QUICKLY IF THEY WANT TO REACH THE EMPEROR'S CITADEL ALIVE!

OKAY, TEAM -- WE'RE THROUGH THE TERMINAL GATE!

PROGRAMMED TO THE **BATTLE PLAN** OF THEIR NEW MASTERS, THE POWERFUL **VIPER AUTOMADONS** BLAST THEIR WAY INTO THE STREETS OF THE **IMPERIAL CITY.**

SECURITY! WHERE'S OUR AIR COVER?! WE'RE BEING ANNIHILATED!

WEDGE! ALL TEAMS! WATCH IT! SCANNER SAYS WE'VE GOT TWENTY GUNSHIPS HEADIN' STRAIGHT AT US!

GOT IT, BOSS! GRIFF--LOCK IN THE *AIR-DEFENSE* PROCEDURES!

LOCKED 'N' LOADED, WEDGE. THIS BABY'S READY TO SMASH *ANY-THIN'* THAT FLIES!

BELTANE'S VIPER AUTOMADONS ARE TRULY *SUPERIOR* TECHNOLOGY--ABLE TO PROTECT THEMSELVES WITH POINT-OF-IMPACT DEFLECTORS... AND *GRAB* LOW-FLYING GUNSHIPS FROM THE SKIES!

WE'RE *HERE!* WE'RE AT THE *CITADEL.* WE'RE GOING TO PULL DOWN THE *EMPIRE!*

BWEEP BDOOT FREET BIP BIP

YES, ARTOO, I *AGREE...* DESPITE GENERAL CALRISSIAN'S OPTIMISM, THE ODDS ARE STILL *7827 TO ONE* THAT WE ARE *ALL* GOING TO BE DESTROYED!

STOP LEANIN' ON MY *HEAD,* DROID, OR I'LL RIP YER *ARM* OFF!

THREEPIO MAY BE CLOSER TO THE TRUTH THAN HE KNOWS. THE *GUNS* THAT PROTECT THE EMPEROR'S CITADEL ARE THE MOST ADVANCED *TURBOLASERS* IN THE IMPERIAL ARSENAL!

AND WHILE THE VIPER AUTOMADONS GO UP AGAINST THESE POWERFUL CANNONS, *EMPEROR PALPATINE* HAS SOMETHING EVEN *MORE* FORMIDABLE IN STORE FOR THE REBEL ATTACK.

I'M *NOT* COMING DOWN THERE--CAN'T YOU SEE I AM INSPECTING MY *GALAXY WEAPON?*

BUT EMPEROR... THE *CITADEL* IS UNDER ATTACK!

YOU MUST DEAL WITH THIS SCUM!

I DON'T NEED THOSE WAR DROIDS. UNLEASH THE *CHRYSALIS BEASTS!*

BUT YOUR MAJESTY...

YES, YOUR MAJESTY. IT SHALL BE DONE AS YOU *WISH.*

THE WAR DROIDS WILL BE *DESTROYED.*

SON OF ULTRON